

Spring 2016

# Evaluating Restorative Justice: A Guide for Practitioners

Nakee Yalon Holloway  
*Governors State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://opus.govst.edu/capstones>



Part of the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Holloway, Nakee Yalon, "Evaluating Restorative Justice: A Guide for Practitioners" (2016). *All Capstone Projects*. Paper 232.

For more information about the academic degree, extended learning, and certificate programs of Governors State University, go to [http://www.govst.edu/Academics/Degree\\_Programs\\_and\\_Certifications/](http://www.govst.edu/Academics/Degree_Programs_and_Certifications/)

Visit the [Governors State Education Department](#)

This Project Summary is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Capstone Projects at OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship. For more information, please contact [opus@govst.edu](mailto:opus@govst.edu).

Evaluating Restorative Justice: A guide for practitioners

By

Nakee Yalon Holloway

B.A. Governors State University, 2012

M.A. Governors State University, 2013

CAPSTONE

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctorate of Education  
With a major in Interdisciplinary Leadership

Governors State University  
University Park, IL 60484

2016

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Committee Chair: Professor Vincent Jones, J.D.

Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, College of Arts and Sciences

Governors State University

Committee Member: Dr. Mary Bruce, Ph.D.

Full Professor, College of Arts and Sciences

Governors State University

Committee Member: Dr. James Coldren, Ph.D.

Managing Director of Research, Associate Professor, College of Arts and Sciences,

CNA Analysis and Solutions, Governors State University

Committee Member: Dr. Terri Winfree, Ph.D.

President

Prairie State College

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my chair and advisor Professors James Coldren and Vince Jones, for their continuous support of my Doctoral study and related research, for their patience, motivation, and immense knowledge. It was their guidance that helped me in all the time of research and writing of this capstone. I could not have imagined having better advisors and mentors for my doctoral studies.

I would like to thank the rest of my committee: Dr. Terri Winfree and Dr. Mary Bruce, for their insightful comments and encouragement, which incited me to widen my research from various perspectives.

I thank my fellow doctoral colleagues for the stimulating discussions, for the sleepless nights we were working together before deadlines, and for all the fun we have had in the last three years.

Last but not certainly not least, I would like to thank my family: my Husband, my Mother, God Mother and my children (Joel and Jasper) for supporting me spiritually throughout this process and in my life in general. This journey would not have been possible without your dedication, love and support. This degree is for you all. I Love You!!!

**With God all things are possible. I thank GOD for his guidance, strength, patience and wisdom throughout this process. To GOD BE ALL THE GLORY!**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
<i>Background of Study</i> .....	1
<i>Problem Statement</i> .....	2
<i>Purpose of the Study</i> .....	3
<i>Study Significance</i> .....	5
<i>Study Limitations</i> .....	7
<i>Organization of the Study</i> .....	7
CHAPTER 2: GLOSSARY.....	8
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	9
CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	12
Restorative Justice.....	12
Program Evaluation.....	17
Utilization Focused Evaluation.....	18
Developmental Evaluation.....	20
Empowerment Evaluation.....	21
Evaluating Restorative Justice.....	22
Evaluating Youth Oriented Restorative Justice.....	25
CHAPTER 5: REFLECTION.....	28
CHAPTER 6: METHODOLOGY.....	31
Design.....	31
Sample.....	32
Data Collection.....	33
Protection of subjects.....	35
Procedure.....	35
Variables.....	36
Data Analysis.....	36
Measures.....	36
Coding.....	38
Ethical Considerations.....	38
CHAPTER 7: RESULTS.....	40

Data Analysis.....	40
Moderating Variables.....	45
CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION.....	46
Limitations.....	
Significance to Restorative Justice Practice.....	48
Future Studies.....	49
Conclusion.....	49
REFERENCES.....	51

## TABLES AND FIGURES

### TABLES

Table 1: Two Views of Justice	14
Table 2: Restorative Justice Practices	16
Table 3: Guiding Questions	34

### FIGURE

Figure 1: Methods and Measures Frequency	41
Figure 2: Evaluation Type	41
Figure 3: Data Collection methods	42
Figure 4: Demographics Frequency	43
Figure 5: Program setting	44

## APPENDICES

Appendix (A): Restorative Justice Primer
Appendix (B): Proposal Approval Form
Appendix (C): Final Transmittal Form
Appendix (D): Committee Approval Form

### **Abstract**

Restorative Justice (RJ) Programs exist in schools, workplaces, communities, the justice system, and other community and organizational settings and are targeted at various populations. In spite of numerous restorative interventions, there have been few comprehensive evaluations of those interventions that document RJ successes or provide evidence to increase the likelihood of success. RJ is responsive and emergent in nature; it is dynamic and ever changing. It is not a program with a linear path from idea to design to implementation to outcomes. RJ presents challenges to traditional approaches to research, such as process evaluations and long-term outcome studies (Llewellyn, Archibald, Clairmont, & Crocker, 2014). This research will provide an examination and synthesis of the ways in which RJ programs include evaluation into program operations and processes, and the challenges these programs face in so doing. It will also provide a prescriptive guide regarding how to evaluate RJ programs with methodological rigor.

**Keywords:** Restorative Justice, program evaluation, effectiveness, success

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

In recent years, program administrators of social service organizations in various fields have felt the growing pressure to demonstrate that the work they do is evidence-based. People who provide Restorative Justice services and interventions are not exempt. They, too, are being asked to provide evidence-based evaluations of their work at an increasing rate. Grants and funding often depend on a program's ability to produce solid evaluations of the interventions and the impact and outcome of them. Not surprisingly, this trend has many Restorative Justice Program administrators and providers wondering what, exactly, it means and how they can successfully evaluate these programs.

The simplest response is that you have to be able to point to solid, concrete evidence—hard data—showing that the impacts posed are tangible; it is simply not enough to say, “I know RJ works; I’ve seen it change lives”. To meet this standard, programs need to provide proof that RJ is more successful at reducing recidivism, crime, and delinquency and in fact it does promote positive socio-behavior and that these changes are sustainable over the long term. These programs, however, are challenged with finding ways to collect the necessary information so that funders; fellow program professionals; state officials; and other relevant stakeholders have confidence that RJ produces the results it claims.

### **Background of the study**

Restorative Justice has historical links to indigenous American cultures, and has been existent in many cultures throughout human history (Zehr, 2002). Restorative justice practices generally comprise the following four components: (a) victim offender mediation, (b) circles (peace-making and sentencing), (c) community reparative boards,



and (d) conferences (family, victimless<sup>1</sup>) (Zehr, 1990, p. 16). However, there exist wide-ranging interpretations and uses of these practices, which are extant in numerous settings in society, (i.e. the justice system, schools, homes, workplaces, communities).

Because of the numerous applications and modes (i.e. circles, conferences, victim impact panels, etc.) of restorative practices, there have emerged a plethora of programs which affirm to be restorative in nature. Many of these programs are shaped on different aspects and delineations of Restorative Justice, presenting challenges to program evaluators (Latimer, 2006). As a result of the different interpretations and uses of Restorative Justice, programs implemented utilizing these practices and values are very broad and complex.

### **Problem Statement**

Any individual RJ program or intervention encompasses multiple disciplinary actions and methods for addressing those actions. Most, if not all, of these interventions are conducted by laypersons and ordinary citizens with training in the RJ practices. As a result, there are diverse activities understood and interpreted in diverse manners, implemented in diverse ways, and involving diverse participants. Add to that, unlike traditional correctional interventions which seek to change offenders alone, RJ efforts are directed toward a host of stakeholders affected by a harm (i.e. victims, offenders, communities, etc.) and seeks to repair the relationships broken amongst these groups (Zehr, 1995). Given the complexity of the unique values of RJ which produce unique uses, complexity spirals over into the evaluation of RJ.

---

<sup>1</sup>Victimless conferences refers to conference where the victim is not present for various reasons surrogate victims are used (Zehr, 1990).

Specifically, many researchers have claimed that “Restorative Justice Programs are shaped around innovative ideas and idealistic hopes” (Acorn, 2004; Walgrave, 2008, page 17). Therefore, restorative programs present an array of evaluation challenges. Many of the programs are unstructured or underdeveloped, lack evidence based standards, were developed around either implicit or unknown goals, thus making data tracking inconceivable. Accordingly, the evaluation of these programs is also questionable (Acorn, 2004; Walgrave, 2008). In addition, there exist no concrete standards by which to evaluate RJ Programs. Thus, Restorative Justice challenges standard evaluation activities. RJ presents challenges to traditional approaches to research, such as process evaluations and long-term outcome studies (Llewellyn, Archibald, Clairmont, & Crocker, 2014).

#### **Purpose of the study**

One of the central themes of this research is the notion that everyone is an evaluator. Because people involved in RJ programs incorporate their values in their work and look for ways to determine if the work they do in the name of their values is having an impact (hence, e-value-ation). There are differences in the complexity with which evaluation gets done; everybody does it, or wants to do it at some level. In addition, the work of RJ evaluation is grounded in a long and respected tradition of evaluation research including traditional; utilization focused; empowerment; and developmental evaluation research.

This research will illuminate the connections and pathways to accomplishing the work of RJ evaluation. This study will examine the evaluation methods and practices of Restorative Justice Programs on a national level. The research will examine and assess

how programs evaluate success and the standards used to solidify continued practice. The examination of evaluation methods and practices of programs will be conducted in an attempt to provide a clear standard by which to examine Restorative Justice Programs.

Further, this research will fill an important gap in the applied research literature regarding evaluation of RJ programs. It will provide an examination and synthesis of the ways in which RJ programs include evaluation into program operations and processes, and the challenges these programs face in so doing. It will also provide a prescriptive guide regarding how to evaluate RJ programs with methodological rigor. This information will be gleaned from previous program evaluations, and will ultimately provide 'non-evaluators' involved in RJ programs the basic information they need to include evaluation in their thinking about program design and operations; to collect the basic data needed; and conduct basic analysis tasks that will enable them to better design and manage their RJ programs.

The research approach is grounded in a framework for conceptualizing of restorative justice overarching theory. This evaluation approach will be guided by two overarching questions. The guiding research questions for the study are:

- 1. What are the common program characteristics (type of program, location, population served, years in operation) of RJ.**
- 2. What are the methods, protocols and best practices used to evaluate Restorative Justice Programs?**
- 3. What are the challenges and barriers that programs have experienced in evaluating RJ initiatives?**

The data collection for this project involves secondary analyses of evaluation reports. The researcher will identify through purposive sampling restorative justice evaluations identified through the literature review, by reputation, a pool of current Restorative Justice Program evaluations. Secondary analyses will be used gather information on the evaluation methods and measures used to evaluate these programs. Approximately, 12 RJ program evaluation reports will be analyzed paying close attention to the evaluation methodologies, measures and processes of the original evaluation. The researcher will also focus on how the evaluation was conducted. Data collection will be centered largely on the design; methodology; findings; and limitations of the evaluation. To gather eligible studies for the study, a thorough and comprehensive search will be conducted of research on RJ literature and evaluations conducted in the last 20 years. The studies will primarily be drawn from the Internet, social science journals, and governmental and nongovernmental reports.

### **Study Significance**

Sherman and Strang conducted a meta-analysis of eleven evaluation reports of Restorative Justice Programs, and concluded: "Effective Restorative Justice Programs can reduce recidivism among violent criminals." (2006, p. 43). In essence, these efforts have the ability to shift the paradigm with which the penal system of the United States operates. Restorative Justice deviates from the notion of punishment, incapacitation, and institutionalization that has shaped our Criminal Justice system. Restorative Justice stands to be another far-reaching movement in our nation. Therefore, this drastic shift will plausibly alter the culture, climate, and fabric of our country by challenging leaders

to reshape the way in which they handle individuals, relationships, youths, and those within the community in general.

However, research such as Sherman's and Strang's leaves to question what an effective RJ program evaluation looks like in practice since there is no concrete standard for measuring and assessing effectiveness. In order for programs to purport effectiveness, there must first be a standard by which to measure success and support claims of effectiveness in practice. Therefore, it is vital to examine the evaluation methods used by programs as this can potentially provide a standard with which to assess effective and ineffective RJ programs. This research will provide a standard by which programs can begin shaping; building; implementing; and sustaining effective RJ programs and interventions Restorative Justice programs. This research will interpret whether RJ programs can truly report success on producing the results it was initially designed to achieve (i.e. reducing the likelihood of reoffending, and/or reducing current incarceration costs) as well as provide a criteria for evaluating restorative justice programs and practices.

This research will examine the processes and evaluations methods of Restorative Justice Practices. Specifically, this study discusses the challenges and difficulties in evaluating restorative justice and offers recommendations for addressing them. Particularly, the study will (1) examine and asses the challenges to pose to evaluation activities, (2) examine completed evaluations to determine how they have addressed questions about process and impact, and (3) offer recommendations and suggestions for evaluating these practices.

### **Study Limitations**

This study accessed secondary sources of data, which served as the primary information and data for analyses. Secondary analysis of data has been a method of data collection for sociologists and other researchers for years; however, this method of data collection produces the possibility of misinformation of data. Specifically, there is the possibility of missing data, the possibility of unstandardized data categories, and the possibility of an overabundance of information when implementing secondary data. (Hofferth, 2005)

### **Organization of the Study**

The study is structured into seven chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview for the research study. The information in this section will clarify the justification for examining and assessing program evaluation of Restorative Justice program and interventions. Chapter 2 provides a glossary of pertinent terms, Chapter 3 provides the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 4 provides a review of literature associated to the study. The review of literature is a combination of past and present research that will provide a clear and definitive perspective on the research topic as well as provide insight to the research that is needed. Chapter 5 will provide a reflection section in which the researcher will explain her encounters and experiences with RJ program and the evaluation of these programs. Chapter 6 will delineate the methodology used for this study. Chapter 7 will provide the assessment, analyses and interpretation of the data. Chapter 8 will summarize the findings from chapter 7 along with the implications. Finally an artifact is provided in the form of a brief primer offering data informed recommendations for evaluating Restorative Justice.

## Chapter 2

### Glossary

The research glossary defines terms that will be used throughout this study. Its' purpose is to describe methods; measurements; statistical procedures; and other aspects of the research. The Restorative Justice glossary defines terms used to describe aspects of Restorative Justice practices.

*Restorative Justice* is "A process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offence and to collectively identify and address harms, need, and obligation, in order to heal and put things as right as possible" (Zehr, 2002, p. 37).

*Recidivism* describes any offense that occurs after the initial offence which led to juvenile to detainment at Champaign County Detention center, including rearrests, reconviction, and re-incarceration.

*Process Evaluation* involves "developing and analyzing data to assess program processes and procedures, and determining the connections between various program activities" (Bynum, Coldren, & Thome, 1989, p. 6).

*Outcome Evaluation* involves "developing and analyzing data to assess program impact and effectiveness" (Bynum, Coldren, & Thome, 1989, p. 7).

*Impact Evaluation* involves measuring and assessing program processes, activities, and outcomes to determine whether the proposed program had a causal influence on important program outcomes (Patton, 2010, p. 37).

### Chapter 3

#### Theoretical Framework of Restorative Justice

The study of crime and deviance is centered on many theories which provide several hypotheses explaining the causation of crime, deviance, and delinquency. Additionally, each criminological theory proposes a method for minimizing and potentially eliminating crime if the proposed causes are properly attended to whether the cause is said to be biological, psychological, or social. Rather the theory of deterrence, labeling, conflict, control, etc. all of these propose different causes and remedies of crime. Among these theories is the theory of reintergrative shaming introduced by John Braithwaite. According to Braithwaite (1989), reintergrative shaming is defined as a “form of shaming, imposed as a sanction by the criminal justice system, which is thought to strengthen the moral bond between the offender and the community”.

Braithwaite introduces this theory after thoroughly examining the theories of crime that have been said to shape the current retributive and punitive system of justice. In particular, he speaks to the inability of these theories to resolve crime problems in our society. The labeling theory, for instance, further dehumanizes the offender, making the likelihood of reintegration inconceivable. Furthermore, Braithwaite spends some time refuting the Conflict theory and its basic premise that laws are created by the wealthy and ruling class. Braithwaite's refers to Jock Young, who conversely states the laws support the interest of the middle class and inference to them supporting the rich and is in essence a false presumption.



Braithwaite refutes several theories and the methods they propose for dealing with wrongdoing. In Braithwaite's book entitled *Crime, shame and reintegration* (1997, p.14), the Reintegrative Shaming Theory, brings criminals face to face with the consequences of their acts (the consequences of their acts for instance, by exposing them to their victims so that [they] may be in touch with the havoc caused in the lives of others may induce a fine-tuning of moral perception.

It is the basic premise that links the Reintegrative Shaming Theory directly to Restorative Justice and its underlying principles. As will be explained throughout this research, restorative justice is a process that includes all those affected my crime in an attempt to restore all parties. In particular, the offender plays a major part in the process to promote accountability and reconciliation. The onset of accountability and reconciliation is a result of the inclusiveness of the restorative process and the open communication which stimulates a strong understanding of harm inflicted on the victim. To solidify Braithwaite's theory of Reintegrative Shaming, Charles Barton, (2000, p. 16), "Restorative Justice programs or intervention can only be deemed constructive based upon its ability to accomplish the four objectives". These objectives include:

1. Re-engaging the offender at a moral psychological level with the consequences of their behavior.
2. Aiding the moral and social development of the offender, so that they learn and become wiser for the experience.
3. Aiding emotional and moral psychological healing from the trauma of the criminal incident through interaction between the parties and symbolic reparation.

4. Tempering unequivocal disapproval of the wrongful behavior (shaming) with expressions of respect and acceptance of the individual into their community (reintegration). (Barton, 2000, p. 16)

Braithwaite's and Barton's introduction Restorative Justice is ideal in dealing with the moral and social development of the victim as well as the offender. Although Barton's principles can be applied to the implementation of many juvenile based programs, they are exhibited throughout the restorative principles and values.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Literature Review**

Literature for this study were gathered by first conceptualizing the work of RJ evaluating and assessing the ways in which this work in various methods of program evaluation. Firstly, it is central to understand restorative justice, its origin, uses, practices etc. and how it differs from traditional systems of justice. Secondly, the researcher searched for evaluation methodologies that stringently align with the work of restorative justice – inclusive, collaborative, participatory, and empowering – and spent some time explaining each evaluation methodology in great detail. Lastly, it is vital to understand why evaluating Restorative Justice programs and interventions is important and to further understand what the research says and moreover, the evaluations that have been conducted of RJ programs. The literature review, therefore, is structured by topics relevant to adding an in depth understanding of RJ and the work of RJ evaluation.

#### **Restorative Justice**

Restorative Justice originated from the American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) cultures in the United States, and from the indigenous cultures of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Graves & Mirsky, 2007). Beginning as a grassroots movement in many Native American communities, restorative Justice has been adopted as a practice in schools, workplaces and even the traditional criminal justice system.

Restorative Justice, while having a strong historical tradition, has recently emerged in the United States and worldwide. As a result of this surfacing, there has been an abundance of Restorative Justice Interventions throughout the nation and abroad.

According to Braithwaite (1989, p. 48), restorative justice is defined as:

...a process where all stakeholders affected by an injustice have an opportunity to discuss how they have been affected by the injustice and to decide what should be done to repair the harm. With crime, Restorative Justice is about the idea that because crime hurts, justice should heal. It follows that conversations with those who have been hurt and with those who have afflicted the harm must be central to the process.

Llewellyn and Howse supported the notion that crime hurts all those affected by a harm (i.e. victims, communities, offenders, and society in general) in a study on Restorative Justice principles (1999). A clear distinction made by Llewellyn and Howse referred to the concept of the victim, particularly who or whom the term victim actually applies. The authors make a clear argument that the person harmed and the person causing the harm are both sufferers of the wrongdoing. They also pose the notion that several other entities/individuals are sufferers of a wrong.

It is understood in Restorative Justice that many stakeholders in the community are affected by harm. This is due in part to both the direct and indirect effects of harm itself. As a result, the sufferers of harm include the victim, families and support persons for both the harmed and harmer; the community where the harm was caused, the society as a whole and even the offender (Zehr, 2002). Restorative Justice seeks to repair the harm to all foreseeable parties that are affected by the infraction. Unlike the traditional justice system, it seeks to repair immediate relationships before repairing distant relationships (Zehr, 2002).

There is this clear distinction between Restorative Justice and the traditional retributive system of justice. Particularly regarding the manner in which offenses should

be rectified and addressed (see Table 1 below). The traditional and conventional “criminal justice system focuses upon three questions: (1) What laws have been broken? (2) Who did it; and (3) what do they deserve (punishment)? From a restorative justice perspective, an entirely different set of questions are asked: (1) Who has been hurt; (2) What are their needs; and (3) Whose obligations are these?” (Umbreit, Vos, Coates, & Lightfoot (2005, p. 258)

TABLE 1: Two Views of Justice<sup>2</sup>

Criminal Justice	Restorative Justice
Crime is a violation of the law and the state	Crime is a violation of people <b>and</b> relationships
Violations create guilt	Violations create obligations
Justice requires the state to determine blame (guilt) and impose pain (punishment).	Justice involves victims, offenders, and community members in an effort to put things right.
<b>Central focus:</b> offenders getting what they deserve	<b>Central focus:</b> victim needs and offender responsibility for repairing

Because RJ is collectively focused (i.e. focused on repairing harm to all involved), many view Restorative Justice as an inadequate method for dealing with crime/harm. Many argue Restorative Justice is not equipped to handle large scale crime problems that are existent in our society. For instance, according to Barbara Hudson (2003, p. 52), “it cannot be assessed that particular groups and particular offenses are amenable to the type of agreement between offenders and victims”. Hudson refers specifically to crimes such as rape and murder and discusses the inability of the restorative process to reconcile such offenses and satisfy the needs of both the offender

<sup>2</sup> Umbreit, Vos, Coates, & Lightfoot (2005, p. 258)

and victim. Further Hudson purports that it is simply idealistic of RJ to assert that it can repair harm to the community.

On the other hand, over the last 20 years, there have been many references to the success of restorative justice at reducing recidivism within our justice system and that sustain that RJ is very effective at restoring individuals who have been harmed by violent crimes. Additionally, research has supported the notion that Restorative Justice initiatives have improved the quality of life in our communities, schools, workplaces, and throughout all facets of society. Professor Lawrence Sherman and Dr. Heather Strang stated:

27 percent fewer crimes were committed by offenders after they'd taken part in a restorative justice conference than those offenders who did not; 33 percent of offenders leaving prison are less likely to reoffend after Restorative Justice; 55 percent of those who have had non-custodial punishments are less likely to reoffend after Restorative Justice (Sherman & Strang, 2002, p. 12 &17).

In addition to reducing recidivism, Restorative Justice interventions among many others, have been said to be effective because they deal with the underlying issues that causes one to offend in the first place. Researchers, activists and policy makers alike are beginning to pay attention to these underlying issues (i.e. behavioral health, social capital, unemployment, disenfranchisement, etc.) that can attribute to a person committing crime and the ways in which to effectively address these issues. Many of these experts are criticizing the traditional methods of handling offenders and purporting that these methods, specifically incarceration, are not dealing with the contributing issues that causes one to commit crime. Similarly, policy makers and activists have stated that

traditional methods of dealing with crime – incarceration - are methods to continuously and consistently criminalize the disenfranchised and thus focus is being turned to interventions that are restorative in nature for both the victim and offender. Specifically, Dr. Christina Rivers, stated that while incarceration was intended to protect the American society is has become a mechanism to marginalize minority populations; a mechanism that is inefficient in handling the underlying social and behavioral issues; and, further is a method that imperils the “core American values of democracy, liberty and equality” (2013, p. 3).

Due to the substantial research which supports the success and continued use of Restorative Justice practices and research that opposes the use of incarceration particularly mass incarceration as a way to deal with crime, many program managers; innovators; funders; and policy makers have turned to new grassroots movements such as restorative principles to shape program implementation and policy. Restorative justice, its practices and interventions, are no longer a grassroots movement and have been utilized in multiple settings to settle disputes, repair harm, build and sustain community, and improve the overall quality of life in various facets. The use of circles; conferences; mediation; and community reparative boards are said to restore, reconcile, repair, and transform those who partake in the aforementioned practices. Moreover, these practices in essence shape the restorative process and are responsible for producing restorative outcomes. The clarification or definition of each of these practices in essence is vital to comprehending the Restorative process in its entirety and subsequently, the evaluation of restorative programs utilizing these practices.

Table 2: Restorative Justice Practices
<p><b>Circle Sentencing:</b> Sometimes called peacemaking circles or talking circles, originated as traditional sanctioning and healing practices of American Indians in the United States and aboriginal peoples in Canada. Circle sentencing is a holistic reintegrative approach that is designed to address the criminal and delinquent behaviors of offenders as well as the needs of victims, families, and communities (Bazemore &amp; Umbreit 2001, p.8).</p>
<p><b>Conferences:</b> Restorative conferences, which have also been called Restorative Justice Conferences, family group conferences and community accountability conferences, originated as a response to juvenile crime. A Restorative Conference is a voluntary, structured meeting between offenders, victims and both parties' family and friends, in which they address consequences and restitution. Restorative conferences are explicitly victim-sensitive. The conference facilitator arranges the meeting. In some cases, a written statement or a surrogate replaces an unwilling victim. The conference facilitator sticks to a simple script and keeps the conference focused, but intentionally does not testify. The intent is to allow subsequent conferences to succeed without a facilitator (Bazemore &amp; Umbreit, 2001, p. 6).</p>
<p><b>Victim-offender mediation (VOM):</b> also called victim-offender dialogue, victim-offender conferencing, victim-offender reconciliation, or Restorative Justice Dialogue - is usually a meeting, in the presence of a trained mediator, between victim and offender. This system generally involves few participants, and often is the only option available to incarcerated offenders (Bazemore &amp; Umbreit, 2001, p. 6).</p>
<p><b>Community reparative boards:</b> Typically are composed of a small group of citizens, prepared for this function by intensive training, who conduct public, face-to-face meetings with offenders sentenced by the court to participate in the process (OJJDP.com, 2013).</p>

Research has suggested that restorative practices are drastically more successful than the traditional retributive system of justice. Thus, the sustainability of the Restorative process and programs utilizing these practices is contingent on some measurement of its processes, activities, and impacts.



### **Program Evaluation**

Program evaluation requires rigorous, systematic methods of measuring and assessing the value, quality, need, and effectiveness of a program or policy. Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004) lay the framework for evaluation research as a whole, and subsequently its use in social science. They define evaluation research as a “systematic application of social research methods in assessing the conceptualization and design, implementation, and utility of social programs” (p. 8). According to Rossi et al., (2004) program evaluation began to flourish as a response to the influx of human service programs implemented post World War II, to address the many social issues in the United States (i.e. homelessness, poverty, unemployment). As the implementation of social programs grew, the need for evaluation research became more prominent as a tool to measure and assesses them, including the effectiveness and necessity of the programs. Consequently, evaluation research became essential and matured over time.

As society shifted, so did social programs, and thus evaluation methods. Evaluation methodology maintained the systematic, empirical approach and furthermore, expanded to include processes for measuring and assessing; program need, program design; program implementation; and service delivery, impacts and outcomes of programs; and program efficiency (Rossi et al., 2004).

In response to the sudden increase of such programs, evaluation became a necessity to government, program managers, policy makers, and program funders. Government and funders utilized program evaluation as a means of measuring and comparing cost effectiveness and outcome effectiveness (Rossi, 2004). Program managers began to utilize evaluation as a tool to improve service delivery to their clients.

Overall program evaluation began to escalate as a valued research entity and acted as a check and balance on fund appropriation in government, effective service delivery for program managers, and a needs assessment tool for both funders and program managers alike (Rossi, 2004).

Rossi et al (2004) lists several purposes of evaluation research. These include influencing social thought and differentiating between effective and ineffective social programs. They suggest in order to accomplish these tasks, evaluators must approach an evaluation scientifically, addressing a scope of evaluation questions in an attempt to assess program implementation and success. To further support these claims, Balcom stated “one salient feature of evaluation as a type of inquiry is that it begins with an evaluation question or questions in order to focus data collection and claims” (Balcom, 2012, p. 3). Both researchers (Rossi and Balcom) contend that evaluation research should be shaped around a formal list of questions the evaluator is seeking to measure (Balcom, 2012; Rossi et al., 2004).

### **Utilization Focused Evaluation**

In contrast to the above mentioned approaches to evaluation research, Utilization Focused Evaluation, introduced by Patton, is a form of program evaluation conducted “for and with specific, intended primary users for specific, intended uses.” (Patton, 2008). The focus of this form of evaluation is to engage potential intended users in the evaluation process, so that there is a greater likelihood that the products of the evaluation will be used. The collaboration between stakeholders (intended users) and evaluators will enhance shared understandings about program activities and goals, and provide a focus for evaluation research activities and products. Moreover, this form of evaluation is very

personal and situational; allowing the evaluator to tailor the evaluation to both fit the program (Patton, 2004). By Patton's determination, the evaluation should be tailored to meet the needs of the program and the stakeholders (program managers, executives, and funders, for example). Patton deviates from traditional evaluation methods introduced by Rossi et al., and determines that evaluation questions will shape the evaluation, and therefore, should not be prearranged but rather should be constructed and drafted from constant interaction with the stakeholders/intended users of the program (Patton, 2008).

Utilization Focused Evaluation, although key in engaging stakeholders and promoting use of evaluation findings, does have limitations. Patton spoke specifically about the difficulties evaluators face when attempting to engage stakeholders in the evaluation process. Although Patton gave several suggestions for overcoming such obstacles, he contends evaluators must be seasoned in the evaluation process in order to be successful at this task. In addition to being a seasoned evaluator, the researcher must possess excellent interpersonal skills in order to communicate effectively with diverse groups of stakeholders (Patton, 2008).

According to Patton (2008), Utilization Focused Evaluation consists of four basic components. Patton asserts "evaluations must be useful, feasible, must have propriety, and must be realistic" (Patton, 2008, p. 26). Evaluation propriety and ethical standards are rigid however, and several of these components are problematic when attempting to evaluate many social programs. Conceptually, if a program is in a premature stage, it lacks the data needed to conduct an evaluation, rendering the evaluation of such a program neither desirable nor realistic. Although evaluators have the ability to tailor the evaluation, there is a standard which must exist in order to attempt evaluation of a

program. In essence, although Patton introduces Utilization Focused Evaluation, he reiterates the principles discussed by Rossi et al (2004) there must be some systematic method to approaching a program evaluation. There is in fact a standard or conditional state a program must adhere to in order to undergo the evaluation process (Patton, 2008).

### **Developmental Evaluation**

According to Patton (2004), “developmental evaluation includes asking evaluative questions and gathering information to provide feedback and support developmental decision making and course corrections along the emergent path” (p. 6). The evaluator acts as an agent to stimulate ideas, innovations, and developments while making summative evaluations regarding the value and sustainability throughout the developmental process. Evaluation questions are used as a stimulus to invoke and assist in innovation (Patton, 2004). According to Patton (2004), developmental evaluation is said to deviate from traditional evaluation, but actually has several similarities to traditional program evaluation. Traditional evaluation involves both formative and summative evaluation as methods of assisting with implementation of program components and subsequently, measuring and assessing programs after stabilization. It is more methodological and systemic seeking to control and predict, and not accounting for the instability existent in the diverse programs it seeks to evaluate (Patton, 2004).

Developmental evaluation, on the other hand, accounts for the disorganization and obstacles incumbent to most social interventions and seeks to establish a sense of order and certainty in the face of complex program conditions. In addition, under the traditional scope of evaluation, formative judgments are said to precede summative ones, and act as a method of stabilizing a program for subsequent summative inquiries.

Formative evaluation exists under developmental evaluation; however, there is not a linear path from formative to summative evaluation. Summative evaluation although not formally conducted is used throughout the development process as method of measuring and assessing the ability of the innovation(s) to adapt to changing and evolving needs of participants and assessing the significance and value of the innovation(s), new innovations are injected into the program and sequentially summative judgments are formulated. (Patton, 2004)

### **Empowerment Evaluation**

Empowerment Evaluation first introduced by David Fetterman is an evaluation approach that provides communities with the resources needed to monitor, assess and evaluate their own performance. David Fetterman describes it as “the use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and finding to foster improvement and self-determination” (Fetterman, 1994, p. 6). The evaluation approach promotes self-sufficiency in that it teaches individuals to conduct their own evaluations; hence the term empowerment.

Under the Empowerment Evaluation paradigm, the evaluator serves as a coach or group facilitator helping, training and coaching individuals to conduct their own evaluation. This process forces program administrators and program staff to set their own goals for the program and identify their own program performance indicators. The evaluator serves the team by helping to overcome an obstacles or in identifying misnomers in the evaluation process.

Empowerment Evaluation having been adopted by various disciplines included education, government, and community organizations is collaborative in nature and is

very program focused. Fetterman (1994), states the duty of the coach or evaluator, regardless of discipline, is to assist the program team in:

- a. Taking stock – determine program strengths, weaknesses, etc.
- b. Establishing goals and objectives,
- c. Developing strategies to accomplish goals and objectives, and
- d. Helping the program determine the evidence needed to document process toward those preset goals.

Empowerment evaluation, Developmental, and Utilization Focused evaluation, while deviating from conventional methods, are linked to traditional evaluation and provide a space to evaluate and assess complex and intricate social interventions. Utilization Focused evaluation is a process used to engage primary intended users and to encourage use of evaluation findings by the intended users. It does not, however, advocate different evaluation research methods. According to Patton, in developmental evaluation the “intended use is development and the intended users are social innovators” and those wishing to foster or promote social change (2004, p. 17). In Empowerment Evaluation the primary focus is to equip the team with tools and resources needed to implement and sustain their own evaluation. These three evaluation methods while deviating slightly from traditional program evaluation engages program innovators and administrators in a process where they can create, test, measure, assess, and shape ideas and hypotheses, to abridge the complexity within the evaluation process.

### **Evaluating Restorative Justice Programs**

During the last few decades RJ, programs have been the focus of various empirical studies. However, these studies have been focused on understand the practical aspects of RJ programs of the effectiveness of various RJ practices such as conferences and victim offender mediation. Few studies have attempted to tackle how RJ programs

are being evaluated for success and effectiveness. Further, there have no empirical studies that have shed light as to how RJ programs are including evaluation into implementation and day to day RJ activities.

Evaluating Restorative Justice Programs have presented substantial challenges to several researchers (Sherman & Strang, 2000). There has been ambiguity surrounding the delineation and interpretations of Restorative Justice, its values, and the proposed uses and outcomes (Sherman & Strang, 2000). Restorative justice is said to build community; to transform and restore; to provide a space for healing, reconciliation, forgiveness, and capacity building; and to build social skills, and various other competencies and positive outcomes (Zehr, 2002). The use of restorative practices has made using traditional evaluation methods insufficient at measuring the success of such programs. Additionally, former advocates of Restorative Justice Acorn and Walgrave have suggested the goals or proposed outcomes of restorative practices are impractical and utopian (Acorn, 2004; Walgrave, 2008).

Previous evaluations of Restorative Justice Programs have been shaped around conventional evaluation measures similar to those used to assess the traditional retributive system of justice. This is exemplified in Latimer, Dowden, and Muise's meta-analysis, (2005) which utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods to measure the effectiveness of Restorative Justice Programs. However, according to Forget (2003), the traditional evaluation of restorative programs simply reinforces either support for or against the use of these practices, and "overlooks the greatest promise Restorative Justice offers, its potential to transform people and communities" (Forget, 2003 p. 3).

Similarly over the past several years, the restorative justice field has witnessed research which suggests restorative justice practices are significantly more successful than traditional criminal justice interventions. According to Latimer (2006, p.12), the findings from his meta-analysis conclude:

Restorative justice programs are a more effective method of improving victim and/or offender satisfaction, increasing offender compliance with restitution, and decreasing the recidivism of offenders when compared to more traditional criminal justice responses (i.e., incarceration, probation, court-ordered restitution, etc.).

However, in light of these evaluations, there have been few that provide a comprehensive standard for evaluating RJ. As a result, the successful and effective evaluation of RJ on the ground has been few and far between. These programs being implemented largely by lay persons with limited training in RJ adds a level of complexity to including evaluation in program implementation and delivery. Further because of the vast uses of RJ and the lack of a concrete standard by which to implement RJ programs, evaluation becomes even more intricate.



### **Evaluating Youth focused Restorative Justice Programs**

Over the past several years, there has been an increase in the use of juvenile diversion programs within the juvenile justices system as an alternative to incapacitating youth offenders. According to the OJJDP, “the primary objective of diversion programs is to redirect youths away from formal processing in the juvenile justice system, while still holding them accountable for their actions” (2013). There has been an influx in the increased use of diversion programs due in part to the labeling theory<sup>3</sup>, and also due in part to new cognitive theories which provide explanations for the increase of juvenile delinquency and criminality, among these is Piaget’s and Kohlberg’s “rules of the sevens,”<sup>4</sup> which provides a framework for the cognitive and moral developments role in explaining juvenile behaviors. It is these and similar theories that have contributed in some part to the influx of diversion programs within the Juvenile Justice System. According to OJJDP (2013), diversion programs include, “comprehensive treatment programs, drug court, mental health court, and teen court. model court, truancy intervention programs, juvenile holdover programs, respite or shelter care, mentoring programs, curfew prevention programs, parent training, and underage drinking prevention and intervention programs”.. Most recently, restorative justice initiatives and programs have been used as a means of diversion.

---

<sup>3</sup> Labeling Theory - labeling theory “advances the thesis that individuals who are labeled or dramatically stigmatized as deviant are likely to take on a deviant self-identity and become more, rather than less, deviant than if they had not been so labeled” (1994, 128). A label of “deviant,” “delinquent,” or “juvenile offender” can affect the way in which a youth comes to define himself or herself, thus influencing future behaviors and dictating the social roles the youth is allowed to assume (Dick et al. 2004).

<sup>4</sup> A legal theory informally known as the “rule of sevens” proposes degrees of culpability, or criminal responsibility, based on age. Specifically, there is a presumption of “no culpability” up to age seven years, a “rebuttable presumption of no culpability” from ages seven to fourteen years, and a presumption of “culpability” for those children older than fourteen years.

Like most youth oriented programs, restorative justice initiatives seek to promote positive behavior and social skills, which in turn are thought to result in decreased undesirable negative behavior and subsequently, promote positive behavior among youth participants. Restorative Justice programs are introduced to youth clients because they are thought to furthermore increase the ability of youth to make positive choices and build on the abilities (competencies) youths encompass. Youth programs, regardless of the theoretic framework, are more often than not focused on positive youth development.

The four basic assumptions of positive youth development models are as follows:

(1) helping youth to achieve their full potential is the most effective way to prevent them from experiencing problems, (2) youth need opportunities and supports to succeed, (3) communities need to mobilize and build capacity to support youth development, and (4) youth are not viewed as problems to be fixed, but rather as partners to be engaged and encouraged (Small & Memmo, 2004).

These four models provide a consensus of the general theory behind youth programs. Restorative justice, in particular focuses on building youth competencies, and the community providing and maintaining the capacity to be a support system or life line to sustain positive youth behavior. However, these competencies or youth development skills are similarly based upon idealistic outcomes (i.e. positive communication skills, conflict resolutions skills, feelings of self-efficacy, empathy, improved social relationships, etc.). Moreover, the ever-present issue still exists of assessing how successful youth programs are at achieving these outcomes; assessing whether program components are structured to impact these outcomes. This is where the evaluation of these programs becomes crucial.

Evaluating youth programs are unique and present many evaluation barriers, however require the same rigorous evaluation as other social or human service programs. The juvenile population itself poses an overabundance of evaluation complexities. In particular, the juvenile population having certain legal protections and constraints cannot consent willfully and knowingly to certain evaluation methods, such as observation, interviewing, surveying, etc. Therefore, in most instances parental consent is needed for adolescents to undergo most if not all evaluation methods. This is seemingly an easy task. However, most juveniles within the juvenile justice system represent a high proportion of the lower socio-economic class, a high proportion of those poverty stricken, and furthermore, a high proportion of those who lack parental guidance. Therefore, gaining parental consent to conduct any evaluation method becomes a tedious and in some cases, an impossible tasks.

As a result the evaluation of juvenile programs are limited in their capacity to produce an effective evaluation. However, evaluators still have the responsibility of conducting rigorous and valuable evaluations by use of traditional evaluation or newly proposed evaluation methods (i.e. utilization focused, developmental, etc.). The limitations existent when evaluating programs targeted at the youth population can drastically threaten effective evaluation. Therefore, it may be plausible to assume that the evaluation of youth oriented human service programs will more often than not have vast limitations and lack some rigor with reference to validity of empirical data.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Reflection**

Restorative justice and restorative programs are emerging in the United States. Like many new philosophies, Restorative Justice is an emerging discipline and practice that is continuously growing. Therefore, these developing practices make evaluation neither feasible nor realistic. From a practical standpoint, restorative justice programs lack data collection methods and consensus among staff regarding the goals of the program and its activities and what outcome impact the program should produce. Additionally, these programs vary and conform to meet the need of the stakeholders harmed. Because there are no evidence based or best practices that can be applied across the board, the restorative process shifts to meet the need of the victim, offender, and community.

Restorative justice is rich concept and can encompass and can take on many different forms without losing its identity. However, as introduced by Zehr and Toews (2004), there are several key aspects that must be some agreement with reference to several key aspects among theorists and practitioners: need for basic definition, determination of the key values of RJ and a Restorative Justice continuum. Zehr and Toews suggest many practitioners are reluctant to establish a concrete definition of Restorative Justice because of the fear of limiting Restorative Justice practically and limiting its ability to meet the need of all stakeholders. Additionally, practitioners still emphasize there is an underlying need to define Restorative Justice to ensure it is differentiated from other methods such as the retributive and rehabilitation forms of

justice. The confusion and conflict around the diversity of definitions stands to either weaken or strengthen based the ability of Restorative Justice to respond to harm. Although there is confusion around the need for a solid definition of Restorative Justice, there are values that most if not all practitioners deem crucial to Restorative Justice. These fundamental values include but are not limited to: healing, reintegration, inclusiveness, accountability.

As stated previously, Restorative Justice is a philosophy that crime is an infliction against the community and all those directly affected by harm. It deviates drastically from the traditional retributive and adversarial system existent currently within our Criminal Justice system. In restorative justice, the direct and indirect effects of crime should be rectified in the community. Rather than alienating those who cause harm from the community and placing them in a court proceeding, Restorative Justice advocates that community and its stakeholders should engage in a process to promote healing and reconciliation for the victim, community, as well as the person who is responsible for causing harm.

Practically, more often than not Restorative Justice Programs uphold these values and principles on every front. Having been involved in Restorative Justice Evaluation for over five years, I have found the evaluation of such programs to far extend beyond the realm of traditional evaluation and even beyond newly introduced evaluation methods. Previously in this study, the concepts of Utilization Focused and Developmental evaluation were introduced as means of evaluating Restorative Justice. In my experience, the evaluation of these programs require evaluators to be creative even outside of these innovative evaluation methodologies.

Restorative justice is based around a central premise of getting acquainted and building relationships in order the process of restoration and healing to take place. The same qualities in some manner must exist for an evaluation in restorative to commence. In my experience, program administrators and managers like many in leadership, are reluctant of the evaluation process itself. In particular in Restorative Justice Program administrators and the restorative community tend to operate as a family. Like any family structure, those being adopted into the family must have some shared or mutual understanding of the goals or objectives the unit is attempting to accomplish. Therefore, it becomes inherent that the program evaluator be not only familiar with the goals of Restorative Justice but also vested in those goals.

Patton emphasizes that evaluators must in some manner facilitate group cohesiveness. Moreover, evaluators must not only facilitate this cohesiveness, but also operate as an active member of the group, in order for evaluation findings to be useful and realistic. To understand the fabric and foundation of restorative justice and to offer useful, realistic, and doable measures for restorative programs, evaluators must be an active member of the restorative community and evaluative thinking must be built into program operations, practices, and activities. Besides, it is believed by many practitioners in this discipline that you cannot fully understand restorative justice until you have lived restorative justice.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Methodology**

#### **Design**

This capstone is based on secondary analysis of data from existing program evaluations of restorative justice programs and interventions. Secondary data analysis is a research method that re-analyzes data collected from other studies, with the focus on conducting a research investigation different to that of the original study (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002, p. 270). This analysis results in the original data source contributing to new research questions, findings, and outcomes. (Corti & Bishop, 2005, Sec. 4.3). There are vast benefits of secondary analysis of data, including time and cost efficiency (Corti & Bishop, 2005, Sec. 4.0).

Limitations of a secondary data analysis are grounded in the notion of contextualization that derives from conducting one's own research and being engrossed in the research. (Corti & Bishop, 2005, Sec. 5.3; van den Berg, 2005, Sec. 4.0). Specifically according to Corti and Bishop (2005), researchers conducting secondary analysis will lack the contextual knowledge that evolves from being present in the atmosphere of the research setting, it prohibits the researcher from understanding intimately the mood of study participant, the social context of the study, the characteristics of study participants (Corti & Bishop, 2005, Sec. 5.3).

These limitations were minimized in this study because the study focus solely on the evaluation methodologies, measures, processes and outcomes of the original evaluation. This study does not seek to examine the participants or the organizations involved in the original study, the context of the study or perceptions of those involved in

the study. Instead the researcher will pay close attention to how the evaluation reports studied were conducted research and data collection will be centered largely on the design, methodology, findings and limitations of the included evaluations. As a result, this study counterbalances many of the contextual concerns related to secondary analysis of data.

### **Sample**

As aforementioned, this study was based on secondary analysis of existing evaluation reports of RJ programs in a justice setting to assess how evaluations of RJ are conducted in practice. Ten studies were selected for this analysis. The researcher identified through purposive sampling, a pool of RJ program evaluation reports identified through the literature review and by reputation. To gather eligible studies for the study, a thorough and comprehensive search was conducted by the research on RJ literature and evaluations conducted in the last 20 years. The studies were primarily drawn from the Internet, social science journals, and governmental and nongovernmental reports.

A literature search was conducted following the criteria introduced by Sowers, Ellis, and Meyer-Adams (2001). The researcher selected two procedures to search for studies and reports included in this analysis. Firstly, computer searches were done of PsychInfo, Social Sciences Abstracts, Dissertation Abstracts, Proquest and Sage Social Science journals. Key words included in the search were: Restorative justice, program evaluation, recidivism, outcomes, impacts, process, and effectiveness. Secondly, the researchers referred to the reference lists from each study and identified additional studies and research in this area. To be included in the analysis, each study had to meet the following criteria:



1. The study/report evaluated a restorative justice program in a justice setting;
2. The study/report was an original evaluation of a youth oriented RJ program;
3. The study employed a documented research design and data collection process;
4. The study presents research questions and findings based on data analysis; and
5. The study evaluated a youth focused RJ program.

The search identified 51 studies/report in the area of restorative justice and recidivism; of those 51, 10 studies met the above mentioned criteria. Those studies that were excluded were excluded because they either were not original evaluation of programs or did not have a research design or research questions included in the methodology.

**Data collection: Coding procedures**

Standard questions were developed prior to data collection and analysis (see below), and used as a framework for collecting data. The researcher collected data framed around the guiding questions in Table 3 and used those questions as a coding guide.

Table 3: Guiding Questions	Relation to the study
<b>Background of the Program</b> How long has the program been in operation? What population does the program target? What theory provides the framework of the program? What restorative practices does the program use (i.e. circles, conferences, etc.)? Why was this/were these practices selected? Does the program have a mission or vision statement (if so, can you provide it to me?) Does the program have an operating philosophy, if so what is that? How is the program structured? What staff positions does the program employ?	It is essential to understand the types of programs study participants have managed and/or evaluated. In preparing to offer data informed recommendations around evaluating RJ programs the researcher must establish a connection between the RJ programs that study participants have been involved with and those that are existent in the RJ field at large.
<b>Program Funding</b> How is the program funded (sources, amounts, donations v grants v contracts v foundation v other support)? Long-term v. short-term funding? What positions does the program staff that are funded through the funding stream(s)? What funding barriers does the program encounter?	Program funding is essential to the managing, operating, implementing, and evaluating programs. Understanding how programs discussed in the study are funded will provide a more in depth understanding of program implementation barriers, challenges, as well as the types of evaluations processes and methods that are available and feasible.
<b>Program Success</b> How does the program measure success? What are the success indicators/metrics? What are the program outcomes? Does the program have a logic model?	Examining how programs measure success will deepen knowledge around what program evaluation looks like internally at organizations and what types of systems programs have in place to evaluate and assess success.
<b>Evaluation</b> What does program evaluation mean to the organization? What methods, measures, framework? What baseline data is collected, if any? What process, outcome and client data is collected? What evaluation procedures, measure or methods are used? What challenges has the program had in evaluating the program? How have the challenges been addressed? What is missing in internal program evaluation? What program data would be useful in measuring success? How is fidelity measured to program theory and design? Does the program use any evidence-based practices, if so, how do they align with RJ? What lessons have been learned about the program based on evaluation research? What lessons have been learned about how to evaluate your program? RJ is grounded in evaluation research, particularly Utilization Focused and Developmental Evaluation, are these approaches mentioned	The central tenets of this study is to understand the evaluation methods, processes, activities are used to evaluate RJ programs and the evaluative thinking that happens in RJ programs. This section of questions directly targets these tenets and will provide a framework for offer data informed recommendations.

**Protection of subjects**

This study was approved by Governor's State University Institutional review board. There were several measures conducted to ensure protection of identity of the organizations and participants involved in the original study. First, Evaluation reports included in the analysis were assigned a code to ensure confidentiality, and any reference to organizational affiliation will be deleted. Second, research records were securely stored on a password protected personal computer and hard copies of transcripts and other documents will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the personal office of the researcher. The files related to the participant's identities were stored along with the findings of the study accessible only to the researchers of this study. This method – secondary analysis eliminates risks because there is no human interaction and all sources used have already been de-identified. Therefore, there is no infringement on human privacy. The research methods will simply provide a clear picture of Restorative Justice Evaluation. To reiterate, this research will be conducted to respect the confidentiality of all organizations discussed in the evaluation reports and as a result there are no other foreseeable risks to participating in this research project.

**Procedure**

This study examined the methods and processes which are used to evaluate RJ. The study sought to examine, describe and infer, how Restorative Justice programs are evaluated and on what basis. Descriptive and Inferential statistics on a number of variables (i.e. type of program, evaluation method, outcomes, evaluation processes, impacts, etc.) in an effort to both present and explain how RJ programs judge merit and worth. The use of descriptive statistics was simply to describing what the data shows.

With inferential statistics, the researcher was seeking to reach conclusions about programs are thinking about evaluation and explain why and how it is evaluation of these programs are taking place (Creswell, 2002).

### **Variables**

Demographics, funding and evaluation methods were utilized by extracting information from the selected evaluation reports. Some information collected consisted proximity of the organization (U.S or non- U.S) , type of organization (i.e. for profit, not for profit), main funding stream, length of time in operation, population served, length of time using RJ practices, types of practices used, types of evaluation conducted.

### **Data Analysis**

The Statistical Package for the Social Services (SPSS) was utilized in order to analyze the data frequency distributions and bivariate relationships. In order to analyze Question 1--“What are the common program characteristics (type of program, location, population served, years in operation) of RJ programs?”—frequencies and percentages of the program characteristics were determined. Question 2—“What are the methods and procedures for evaluating RJ?”—was analyzed by utilizing frequencies and percentages of the types of evaluation performed and the variables used to measure success. Question 3— “What are the challenges and barriers to evaluating RJ?”—was analyzed by using frequencies and percentages regarding the barriers to evaluation of RJ.

### **Measures**

The researcher applied secondary analysis to data because the focus was on pursuing topics that were distinct to those introduced in the original study (i.e. examining how RJ programs are evaluated) (Hinds et al.,1997); additionally the researcher was

seeking to perform additional analysis of an original dataset or subset of data (Hinds et al., 1997; Heaton, 1998).

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe data gathered from the evaluation reports. Data was collected from 10 evaluation reports (the sample) and the use of descriptive statistics was used to describe how evaluations are taking place within the sample group. Specifically, descriptive statistics were used to describe how evaluations were conducted within the sample population.

Descriptive analysis were gathered to describe the characteristics of organizations, the types of evaluations conducted, and the variables used to evaluate Restorative Justice. Specifically, the study gathered data from these evaluation reports based on the 38 guiding framework questions. The guiding questions had five major sections: 1) background of the program, 2) questions about the RJ program being evaluated (e.g. types of programs participants have evaluated and/or manage), 3) program funding, 4) program success and how it is measured, and 5) program evaluation.

This study seeking to make recommendations to the larger community of restorative justice sought to examine how RJ is evaluated within a smaller group and infer recommendations and suggestions to the larger community around the feasibility and methods with which to conduct evaluations of RJ. Therefore, inferential statistics were used to generalize and make predictions and inferences about the population of Restorative programs and evaluation on a larger scale.

**Coding**

Analysis process began by transcribing all evaluation reports. Evaluation reports were each assigned a number and transcribed into excel. Reports were individually coded and analyzed using methods of qualitative coding and data analysis drawn from Miles and Huberman (1994) and Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003). Specifically, the open coding method used was based on Miles and Huberman (1994) and Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) were used in this study. Open coding helps identify initial phenomena and produces a list of categories. The goal is to code the data for its major categories of information (Creswell, 2007). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), a category represents a unit of information composed of incidences or instances. From coding, five constructs emerged from the data. These five included: 1) barriers and challenges to evaluation 2) types of evaluation, 3) variables, 4) level of engagement and participation in RJ, and 5) outcomes measures to focus evaluation around.

**Ethical Considerations**

This study is a *secondary data analysis*, defined by Koziol and Arthur (2011) as the form of research that involves the collections, processing and re-analyses of data by a researcher with different research objectives and goals. It is therefore, believed that most if not all information provided to the researcher is accurate and mostly unbiased. The data used for this study were gathered from publically available evaluation reports found by the researcher and no human participants were involved in the study. All data collected was de-identified to ensure there were no identifiers of the program or agency would be readily identified from the data. This is was done to ensure minimal to no risk to the organizations, evaluators and individuals that had previous resided in the data.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Results**

#### **Data Analysis**

This study was a secondary data analysis of evaluation reports conducted of Restorative Justice programs. This study asked two overarching questions regarding the evaluation of Restorative justice programs: (a) the methods, protocols and best practices used to evaluate RJ; and (b) the challenges and barriers of performing evaluation. Also, the researcher collected data on the following variables: (a) common demographics of the RJ programs and evaluations and (b) funding sources for the evaluation, and (c). This section will discuss these three questions as well as the study's limitations and strengths, significance to the RJ practice and field.

#### **Research Question 1: Methods and Measures of evaluation**

Percentages and frequencies were used to describe the methods and measures used in the evaluation of RJ programs understudy. Particularly, the researcher examined outcome measures used to make judgements about success and effectiveness of RJ. Specifically, outcome measures were analyzed to determine the measures that programs used to evaluate RJ initiatives. Majority of RJ programs, (90%) measured victim satisfaction, while (70%) measured recidivism (see Figure 1). Other measures used to evaluate RJ programs included offender satisfaction (40%), restitution compliance (40%), remorse, cost effectiveness of RJ, and recognition of wrongdoing on the part of the offender all at (10%). Figure 1 also provides details around the sample methods used to

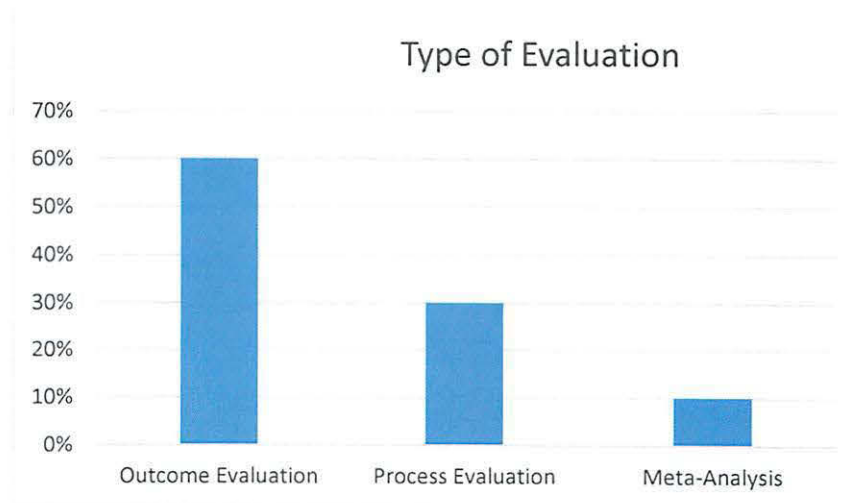
conduct the evaluation of RJ. 30 percent of programs conduct randomized controlled trials, while on (20%) used comparison groups in their study design.

Percentages were also calculated to determine the type of evaluation programs used, such as process evaluations, outcome evaluations, etc. Figure 2 illustrates that 60 percent of program evaluations were outcome evaluations. It is also noteworthy that 40 percent of those outcome evaluations had a process evaluation component. Additionally, Figure 1 illustrates that some 30 percent of the evaluation were solely process evaluations.

Figure 1: Methods and Measures Frequency

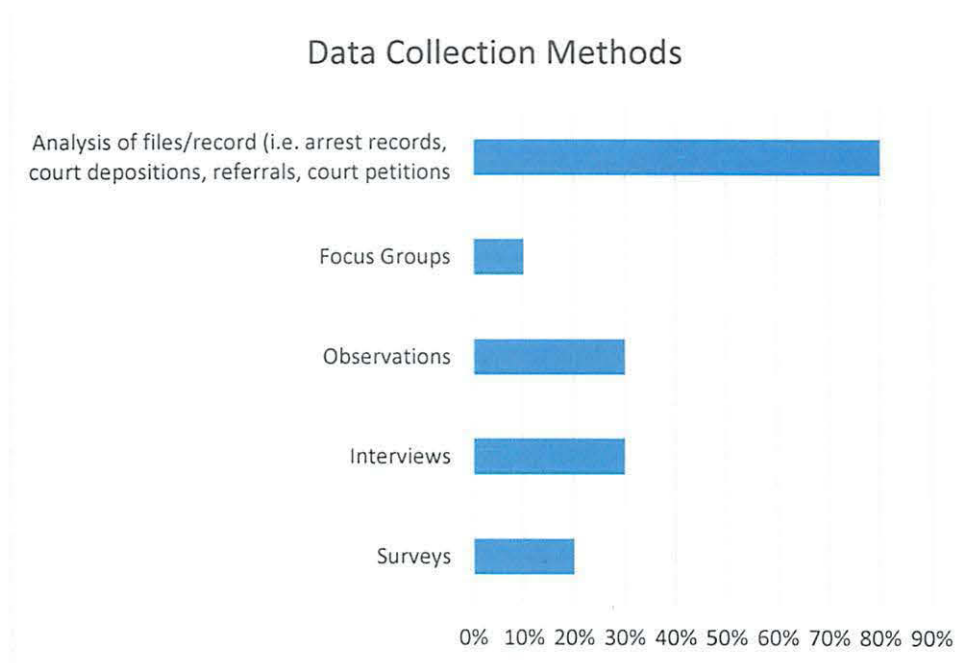
<i>Demographics</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b><i>Outcome measures</i></b>		
<i>Recidivism rates</i>	7	70
<i>Victim satisfaction rates</i>	9	90
<i>Offender satisfaction rates</i>	4	40
<i>Restitution compliance rates</i>	4	40
<i>Remorse</i>	1	10
<i>Cost effectiveness</i>	1	10
<i>Recognition of wrongdoing</i>	1	10
<b><i>Sample</i></b>		
<i>Random assignment to control and/or treatment groups</i>	3	30
<i>Characteristics of control and/or comparison group</i>	2	20

Figure 2: Evaluation Type





This study also examined the data collection methods used by RJ programs. Data collection in many cases is a huge barrier to RJ programs because one of the imminent challenges in evaluating these programs is the lack of available data. In this study, 40 percent of programs stated that the lack of data was a huge barrier to conducting a successful evaluation. However, Figure 3 illustrates the data collection methods programs used to gather data for evaluation purposes. Note worthily 80% of programs used analysis of files or records (i.e. arrest records, court depositions, referrals, court petitions, and written agreements that derived from the RJ process).



#### Sub-Question: Demographics of the Program Evaluation

Frequencies and percentages are illustrated in Figure 4 to determine the demographics of program evaluations examined in this study. Subcategories were illustrated to demonstrate the setting of the RJ program analyzed such as police or court based RJ program. RJ programs were analyzed and results demonstrated that (80%) of

these program were court based, (20%) were police based initiatives. The majority of programs analyzed were housed within juvenile courts and focused on juvenile diversion.

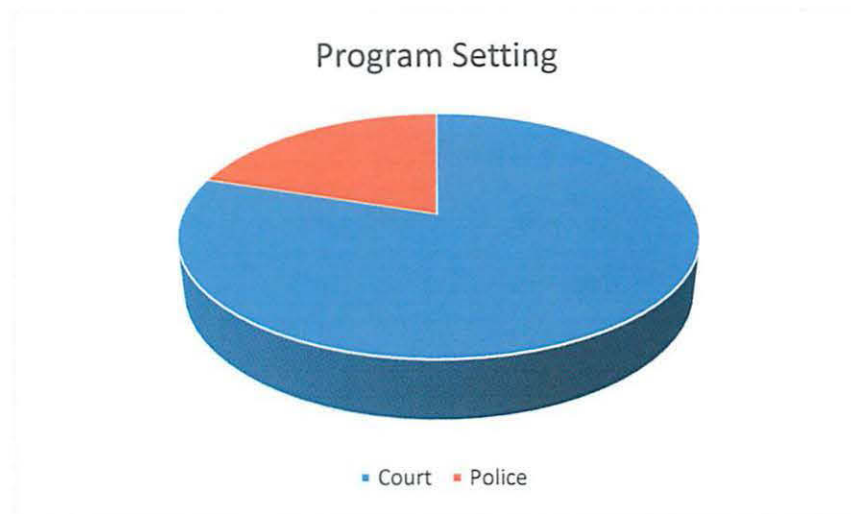
Frequencies and percentages were also analyzed to describe the restorative justice model that programs used (i.e. circles, conferences, victim offender mediation, etc.).

Results illustrated that majority of the programs (90%) used restorative conferencing while only (10%) used victim offender mediation. While the study sought to determine at what point these RJ models were used none of the programs analyzed provided a clear distinction of whether the models were implemented at entry, post charge, presentence or post sentence.

**Figure 4: Demographics Frequency**

<i><b>Demographics</b></i>	<i><b>f</b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>
<i><b>Restorative justice model</b></i>		
<i>Conferencing</i>	9	90
<i>Victim offender mediation</i>	1	10
<i>Entry point</i>	0	0
<i>Precharge</i>	0	0
<i>Post charge</i>	0	0
<i>Presentence</i>	0	0
<i>Post sentence</i>	0	0

The setting of the programs was also analyzed in this study to determine whether the RJ programs were housed in courts, community or within the police setting. Figure 5 demonstrates that (80%) of programs were courts based juvenile diversion programs.



### Research 2: Barriers and challenges to evaluating RJ

As mentioned throughout this study and in the literature, barriers to evaluating RJ are vast. Therefore, this study sought to analyze and assess the particular challenges programs are experiencing when attempting to evaluate their RJ initiatives. The below illustrates a list of challenges that programs experienced when evaluating RJ. The two most significant challenges were low numbers of referrals and lack of data. Each of these challenges were experienced by almost every program included in this study.

Specifically, 90 percent of programs experienced these challenges.

- Low number of referrals
- Lack of ongoing training for facilitators
- Clear understanding and agreement among stakeholders
- Clear understanding of person responsible for monitoring adherence to plans
- Newly established program
- Lack of data

### **Moderating Variables**

Unfortunately, there were several questions that were unable to be answered because of the lack of data reported. For example, I was interested in determining the

funding stream for evaluations that were studied, however very few, if any studies provided information concerning how the evaluation was funded. Understanding funding is particularly noteworthy because a huge barrier in evaluating not just restorative justice but most programs is the lack of or limited funding. There was also rather limiting data around the average length in months and/or years of the original evaluations of RJ. Understanding the time it takes to successfully evaluate RJ is noteworthy as RJ programs on a national scale are attempting to build feasible evaluations that can provide some measure of significant outcomes.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Discussion**

#### **Research Question 1: Methods and Measures of evaluation**

The study found that measuring recidivism was the most common measure of success across programs, with some 70 percent of programs using this measure to assess and examine effectiveness. The study also found that most evaluations of RJ are either process or outcome evaluation or the combination of the two forms of evaluations. Add to that, examined the relationship between the type of evaluation (process, outcome) and the measurement of recidivism to determine which type of evaluation most commonly used recidivism to measure success. The findings from this comparison showed that 40 percent of outcome evaluations used recidivism as the main determinant of success.

As mentioned in the literature, RJ is more successful than the traditional criminal justice system at reducing recidivism, re-arrest and reconviction. Even the most rigorous evaluation of RJ such as those introduced by Sherman and Strang used recidivism to measure success. The measurement of recidivism is the most solid variable with which to purport the success of RJ, thus the findings in this study supports the use of traditional evaluations methods to measure the success of RJ.

The study also illustrated that in addition to measuring recidivism programs used unique measures that are attributed to the restorative process to measure success and effectiveness (i.e. restitution compliance, remorse, stakeholder satisfaction). While only 40 percent of programs used these unique restorative measures to make judgments about success, 60 percent of those programs that used recidivism as a measure incorporated a measurement a unique measure of RJ (i.e. stakeholder satisfaction, restitution compliance

and/or remorse). Researchers who have a long history of evaluating RJ have stated the evaluation of RJ must be framed around traditional evaluation methods while also incorporating some measure of the utopian, idealist values that RJ is centered.

### **Sub-Question: Demographics of the Program Evaluation**

Majority of the RJ programs included in this study were court based programs who used restorative conferencing as a RJ model/practice. While this study only examined youth oriented RJ programs, the findings support the current state of RJ programs nationally. According to the research majority of RJ programs utilize the conferencing model and thus, it is pertinent to understand how programs using this model, whether youth focused or not, are evaluating and assessing the merit and worth of their program.

This study examined the common demographics of youth oriented RJ programs to determine the setting, RJ models that these programs use. According to research, RJ has been said to be very difficult to evaluate because of the vast uses, implementations, and wide of array of uses across multiple settings. This study sought to understand the commonalties and differences of youth oriented RJ programs. Examining both of these components is noteworthy because the purpose of this study is not simply to describe the current state of evaluation of youth oriented programs but also to infer that there are common evaluation practices and methods that can be applicable to RJ program evaluation overall.

### **Research 2: Barriers and challenges to evaluating RJ**

The evaluation of RJ on the ground has been a daunting task as supported by a wealth of research. Because of lack of data and vast uses many program administrators

have shied away from evaluating their programs. The research assessed the barriers and challenges of evaluating RJ in hopes of shedding light on those barriers but also in an effort to offer lessons learned in overcoming these barriers. Therefore this space will be used to give a high level overview of the recommendations to overcoming the barriers introduced in the findings. Recommendations offered by the programs included in this study are as follows:

- Longer term impact evaluations are needed and vital - long term impact evaluations are the truest manner with which to measure and assess the effect RJ has on stakeholders involved in the restorative process.
- Collect data on outcomes of RJ practices – specifically, identifying measurable outcomes that align with goals of program and RJ.

### **Limitations**

Limitations of this study included the extraction and analysis of study reports collected for another purpose. The researcher was therefore, very limited by the scope of the original questions. Additionally, the researcher was uncertain of the integrity of the data, and the reliability and validity of the data. Finally, because of the small sample size of studies used reliability and validity were also a limitation. The most imminent strength of this study was that it provided knowledge of how evaluations are conducted and carried out on a national level.

### **Significance to Restorative Justice Practice**

Researchers are demonstrating that Restorative Justice reduces recidivism and promotes positive outcomes for those involved in restorative practices. However, those involved in administering these programs need to prioritize, develop and be more

inclusive in the rigorous and frequent evaluation of these programs and practices. This research will ultimately provide data-informed recommendations for how to evaluate RJ programs. The findings from this study will be used to create a primer targeted at increasing peoples' knowledge about evaluation approaches pertinent to RJ, and hence, increase the confidence with which they approach the 'valuation' of their work.

### **Future Studies**

While the study was limited in sample size, design, variables explored and instruments used to gather data, recommendations for future research include larger sample, randomly selecting program types and geographic locations of program in an effort to be more representative of the community of Restorative Justice programs. Furthermore, it is recommended that a qualitative study be conducted in order to assess how programs and program evaluators are both conducting evaluation and including evaluation in the implementation of RJ programming. This type of study will allow us to understand from program implementation to service delivery how programs are building evaluation into their service delivery models. It will furthermore, help to understand the limitations and challenges in so doing.

### **Conclusion**

Program evaluation in and of itself is a perplexing process, presenting an assortment of confounding obstacles which evaluators must overcome. Restorative Justice and the programs which utilize such practices are complex, multifaceted, and shaped around a set of broad, idealistic values. It is these idealistic values that have attributed to the increased interest in emerging restorative interventions. However, the evaluation of Restorative Justice initiatives, values, and principles despite the many



challenges, is vital to the sustainability of these interventions. Restorative Justice practices and programs, unlike the traditional system of justice, have been said to reduce recidivism, reconcile, repair and transform. Therefore, the evaluation and assessment of these interventions must in some manner deviate from traditional methods and have a capacity for measuring and assessing these proposed non-traditional outcomes. The purpose of this study was to evaluate and assess how RJ programs are being evaluated with the intent of offering data driven recommendations for evaluating RJ. This body of knowledge and data derived from this study will be used to offer a primer on evaluating RJ programs locally, nationally and internationally.

## References

- Abraham, H. J. (1993). *The judicial process: An introductory analysis of the courts of the United States, England, and France* (p. 314). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Acorn, A., (2004). *Compulsory compassion: A critique of restorative justice*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press. Pg. 1-207.
- Auerbach, C., & Silverstein, L. B. (2003). *Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis*. NYU press.
- Babbie, E., & Benaquisto, L. (2002). *Fundamentals of social research* (First Canadian ed.). Toronto, Canada: Nelson Thomson Canada.
- Balcom, L. (2012). What is in question? A review of literature guiding the development of evaluation questions. Retrieved from <http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Balcom-2012.pdf>
- Barton, C. (2000). Theories of restorative justice. *Australian Journal of Professional and Applied Ethics*, 2(1), 41-53.
- Bazemore, G. Umbreit, M. (2001). A comparison of four conferencing models. *United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)*.
- Braithwaite, J. 1989. *Crime, shame and reintegration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bynum, T. Coldren, J. & Thome, J. (1989). Evaluating juvenile justice programs a design monograph for state planners, Champaign, IL: *Community Research Associates, Inc.*
- Corti, L., & Bishop, L. (2005, January). Strategies in teaching secondary analysis of qualitative data. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 6, No. 1).

- Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative*. New Jersey: Upper Saddle River.
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*.
- Dick, A. J., Pence, D. J., Jones, R. M., & Geertsen, H. R. (2004). The need for theory in assessing peer courts. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(11), 1448-1461.
- Fetterman, D. M. (2001). *Foundations of empowerment evaluation*. Sage.
- Fetterman, D. M. (1994). *Empowerment evaluation*. *Evaluation practice*, 15(1), 1-15.
- Forget, M. (2003, June). Developing a new framework for evaluating restorative justice programs. *Paper presented at the 6th International Conference on Restorative Justice*, June 2003. The Centre for Restorative Justice. Simon Fraser University.
- Friedman, M. (2002). *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Graves, D. & Mirsky, L. (2007). School zero tolerance policies and recommends restorative justice. *American Psychological Association Report*.
- Gould, E. D., Weinberg, B. A., & Mustard, D. B. (2002). Crime rates and local labor market opportunities in the United States: 1979–1997. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 84(1), 45-61.
- Heaton, J. (2008). Secondary analysis of qualitative data: An overview. *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 33-45.
- Hinds PS, Vogel RJ and Clarke-Steffen L (1997) The possibilities and pitfalls of doing a secondary analysis of a qualitative dataset. *Qualitative Health Research* 7(3): 408–424.

Hofferth, S. L. (2005). Secondary data analysis in family research. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(4), 891-907.

Hudson, B. (2003). *Understanding justice: An introduction to ideas, perspectives, and controversy in modern penal theory*. Open University Press 1:218.

Koziol, N., & Arthur, A. (2011). *An introduction to secondary data analysis*. Retrieved From  
[http://r2ed.unl.edu/presentations/2011/RMS/120911\\_Koziol/120911\\_Koziol.pdf](http://r2ed.unl.edu/presentations/2011/RMS/120911_Koziol/120911_Koziol.pdf)

Latimer, J., Dowden, C., & Muise, D. (2005). The effectiveness of restorative justice practices: A meta-analysis. *Prison Journal*, 85(2), 127-144.

Llewellyn, J., & Howse, R. L. (1999). Restorative justice: A conceptual framework. *Prepared for the Law Commission of Canada*.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (1994). *Developmental evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. Guilford Press, June 2010.

Patton, M.Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation*, 3rd Ed. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, C.A.

Peak, K. (2010). *Justice administration: police, courts, and corrections management*. Sixth Edition, Published: Prentice Hall

Rivers, C. R. (2013, October). Executing Democracy: Mass Incarceration and African-American Felon Power. In 2014 National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS) Annual Meeting.

- Rohan, M. & Evans, C. (2012). *Summary of juvenile probation and court services programs and initiatives*. Cook County Juvenile Division
- Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sherman, L.W., & Strang, H. (2000). Recidivism patterns in the Canberra reintegrative shaming experiments (RISE). Canberra: Centre for Restorative Justice, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University.
- Sowers, K., Ellis, R. A., & Meyer-Adams, N. (2001). Literature reviews. *The handbook of social work research methods*, 401-412.
- Umbreit, M. S., Vos, B., Coates, R. B., & Lightfoot, E. (2005). Restorative justice in the twenty-first century: A social movement full of opportunities and pitfalls. *Marq. L. Rev.*, 89, 251.
- Walgrave, Lode, (2008). *Restorative justice, self-interest responsible citizenship*. Portland, Oregon: Willan.
- Zehr, H. (2002). *The little book of restorative justice*, Intercourse, PA: Good Books.
- Zehr, H., & Toews, B. (2004). *Critical issues in restorative justice*. Monsey, NY: Criminal justice press.

**Appendix (A): Restorative Justice Primer**



## Primer for Evaluating Restorative Justice

The primary goal for developing this primer on evaluating restorative justice programs is to give ‘non-evaluators’ involved in RJ programs the basic information they need to include evaluation in their thinking about program design and operations; to collect the basic data needed and conduct basic analysis tasks that will enable them to better design and manage their RJ programs; and to inform the public (including collaborating and strategic partners, and funders) about the purpose, operations, and impact of their programs. There are several important ‘themes’ incorporated in this primer, such as:

- The work of RJ evaluation is grounded in a long and respected tradition of evaluation research, including traditional, utilization focused, empowerment, and developmental evaluation research.
- Everyone is an evaluator (e.g., the term ‘non-evaluator’ is a misnomer) because all people involved in RJ programs incorporate their values in their work, and look for ways to determine if the work they do in the name of their values is having an impact (hence, e-value-ation).
- There are differences in formality and complexity in how evaluation gets done, but everybody does it, or wants to do it at some level.

This primer will help illuminate these connections and pathways to accomplishing the work of evaluation

- The aim is to increase peoples’ knowledge about evaluation approaches pertinent to RJ, and hence, increase the confidence with which they approach the ‘valuation’ of their work.



Many RJ programs have benefitted from evaluation research as by Umbriet, Sherman and Strang, but evaluation is not ingrained in the daily operations of most RJ. It is often viewed as a necessary evil from the outside, not well understood, not often trusted. RJ often challenges these notions; RJ is often an ‘organic’ enterprise = defined by the very nature of its environment; thus, not objectively determined.

Restorative Justice is often community/constituent-driven; RJ or often exploratory in nature, seeking opportunities to strengthen community. It does not begin with the assumption that there is a problem needing a solution. RJ is often ‘emergent’ - what develops is a result of experiences, not defined by a prescription for improvement; RJ is responsive in nature, thus dynamic and ever changing, not a program with a linear path from idea to design to implementation to outcomes.

To arrive at a useful primer on evaluation research, we propose a ‘nuanced’ approach to evaluating RJ programs. Drawing from several evaluation research traditions described above in the literature of this study (i.e. traditional evaluation, Utilization focused evaluation, empowerment evaluation, developmental evaluation). A general approach is offered to evaluating RJ programs. It will incorporate the values of RJ and evaluation research, the needs for evaluation of RJ, the opportunities for evaluation of RJ, methods for evaluating RJ and practical information on collecting and analyzing data.

This primer on evaluating RJ has the following audiences in mind; program designers and developers; program leaders and managers; program staff; program clients.

Key sections of this primer include:

- Discussions of the traditions of restorative justice and evaluation research
- Evaluation basics for non-evaluators

- Data collection basics
- Data analysis basics
- Making decisions based on data
- Conclusions
- Resources

### **Restorative Justice**

Restorative Justice, while having a strong historical tradition, has recently emerged in the United States and worldwide. As a result of this surfacing, there has been an abundance of Restorative Justice Interventions throughout the nation and abroad. The

definition that will be used is provided by John Braithwaite (1989, p. 48), Restorative Justice is, defined as:

...a process where all stakeholders affected by an injustice have an opportunity to discuss how they have been affected by the injustice and to decide what should be done to repair the harm. With crime, Restorative Justice is about the idea that because crime hurts, justice should heal. It follows that conversations with those who have been hurt and with those who have afflicted the harm must be central to the process.

Llewellyn and Howse supported the notion that crime hurts all those affected by a harm (i.e. victims, communities, offenders, and society in general) in a study on Restorative Justice principles (1999). A clear distinction made by Llewellyn and Howse referred to the concept of the victim, particularly who or whom the term victim actually applies. The authors make a clear argument that the person harmed and the person causing the harm are both sufferers of the wrongdoing. They also pose the notion that several other entities/individuals are sufferers of a wrong. It is understood in Restorative Justice that many stakeholders in the community are affected by harm. This is due in part to both the direct and indirect effects of harm itself. As a result the sufferers of harm include the family and support persons for both the harmed and harmer; the community where the harm was caused, as well as society as a whole (Zehr, 2002). Restorative Justice seeks to repair the harm to all foreseeable parties that are affected by the infraction. Unlike the traditional justice system, it seeks to repair immediate relationships before repairing distant relationships. (Zehr, 2002).

There is this clear distinction between Restorative Justice and the traditional retributive system of justice. Particularly regarding the manner in which offenses should be rectified and addressed (see Table 1 below). The traditional and conventional “criminal justice system focuses upon three questions: (1) What laws have been broken? (2) Who did it? and (3) what do they deserve (punishment)? From a restorative justice perspective, an entirely different set of questions are asked: (1) Who has been hurt; (2) What are their needs; and (3) Whose obligations are these? ” (Umbreit, Vos, Coates, & Lightfoot (2005, p. 258).

Criminal Justice	Restorative Justice
Crime is a violation of the law and the state	Crime is a violation of people <b>and</b> relationships
Violations create guilt	Violations create obligations
Justice requires the state to determine blame (guilt) and impose pain (punishment).	Justice involves victims, offenders, and community members in an effort to put things right.
<b>Central focus:</b> offenders getting what they deserve	<b>Central focus:</b> victim needs and offender responsibility for repairing

- ✓ RJ is community focused, collaborative, and a holistic approach to solving problems related to harms and violations of community norms and standards (similar to the functions of formal and informal social control, and the justice system).
- ✓ It is participatory (civic) engagement of all concerned (or their representatives), not the special function of a bureaucratic office.
- ✓ RJ involves participatory, collaborative discussions/dialogues about responsibility, accountability, forgiveness and re-integration, and reparations/repairing harms and damages.

At its core, RJ requires joint responsibility and accountability. Harmful actions are both a sign of individual and collective failure; thus, they provide opportunities for individual and collective actions to restore and repair.

### **Why Evaluate Restorative Justice, What are the Evaluation Research Traditions**

In recent years, program administrators of social service organizations in various fields have felt the growing pressure to demonstrate that the work they do is evidence-based. People who provide Restorative Justice services and interventions are not exempt. They, too, are being asked to provide evidence-based evaluations of their work at an increasing rate. Grants and funding often depend on a program's ability to produce solid evaluations of the interventions and the impact and outcome of them. Not surprisingly, this trend has many Restorative Justice Program administrators and providers wondering what, exactly, it means and how they can successfully evaluate these programs.

The simplest response is that you have to be able to point to solid, concrete evidence—hard data—showing that the impacts posed are tangible. It is simply not enough to say, “I know RJ works; I’ve seen it change lives”. To meet this standard, programs need to provide proof that RJ is more successful at reducing recidivism, crime, and delinquency as well as promoting positive socio-behavior, and that these changes are sustainable over the long term. These programs’ are challenged with finding ways to collect the necessary information so that funders; fellow program professionals; state officials; and other relevant stakeholders have confidence that RJ produces the results it claims. Simply put, evaluating Restorative Justice contributes to the longevity and sustainability of these initiatives. Restorative Justice Evaluation:

- Applies research methods to practical problem-solving (e.g., figuring out what works)
- Holds programs and policies accountable to their plans, visions, goals, objectives
- Improves program development, implementation management
- Produces useful, practical findings (action-oriented)

- Focuses on program theory and theories of change, not necessarily behavioral theory
- Focuses on utilization, clients, discovery

### **Needs and Opportunities for RJ Evaluation Research**

While there has been a fair amount of evaluation research on restorative justice practices to date, that claim RJ is a dynamic approach to the resolution of problems, conflicts, and harms, restorative justice programs, policies, and initiatives should constantly undergo evaluation of progress, success, challenges, needs, outcomes, as well as seek opportunities that will benefit the program. Moreover, there are several commonalities or synergies between restorative justice and evaluation research that should provide the guidance for the application of evaluation research to restorative justice:

- 🚦 **Accountability** – We as individuals, all hold ourselves accountable to our goals, visions, and plans; RJ addresses accountability. Evaluation research (ER) provides methods for identifying common goals, visions, and objectives, then applying research methods to assess progress along those lines.
- 🚦 **Ethics and respect** – RJ holds the ethics of collective responsibility and respect for individuals and different perspectives as paramount; ER holds the respect for individuals, informed consent and informed participation, and the basic autonomy of individuals as core ideals; plus ER seeks to find collaborative, consensus-based approaches to assessing progress, success, and accountability to plans; this is similar to RJ.

- ✚ **Collaborative spirit** – both RJ and ER recognize, and respect the value of multiple perspectives on any problem; this collaborative, holistic perspective is shared by both traditions.
- ✚ **Positive orientation** – just as RJ seeks to promote positive outcomes for individuals, groups, and communities (compared to the identification of the guilty and the administration of punishment), ER seeks to promote positive outcomes and improvements for programs, policies, and initiatives. ER does not seek to identify and publicize failures, rather it seeks to identify goals, visions, plans, and objectives. Further it provides a means to assess progress and fidelity, then offer positive solutions to better and more effective attainment of desired outcomes (Note: this does not address the developmental approach to evaluation; need to address that as well)
- ✚ **Pragmatism** – both RJ and ER are interested in practical, workable solutions to needs and problems. They are less interested in purely theoretical explorations into why things are the way they are (though there is an interest in identifying and resolving ‘root causes’ of problems). This is not to say they are interested in quick fixes and short-term solutions, it means they are interested in reaching solutions to problems that make sense to a diverse group of citizens, practitioners, and stakeholders, perhaps at the expense of a contribution to theoretical understanding.
- ✚ **Discovery** –RJ approaches are often organic, grounded in the issues and constraints present in real life in our communities and organizations. They



are the product of real-time, original, emergent thinking, rather than the application of ‘cookie cutter’ approaches to solving problems. ER too is interested in helping practitioners understand and make sense of their work and the things that are happening around them. This is found mostly in Developmental Evaluation approaches so that they can develop ‘original’ responses to the problems, challenges, and contingencies they confront

### **Evaluation Basics for Non-evaluators**

Evaluation research can answer many sorts of questions, meet different kinds of information needs, and produce different kinds of benefits for those involved with RJ programs. This section explains some of the basic products and utilities that non-evaluators can expect from evaluation research if they engage in evaluation research, even at a basic (non-advanced) level.

The systematic nature of research and evaluation – one of the basic things to understand, and one of the basic rules to follow in evaluation work - is that the collection of data and information should be done systematical. This systematic process includes:

- Collect the same information on clients participating in a program
- Collect the same information about each case the program initiates.
- Collect the same information about program benefits and outcomes for participants.

Collecting information allows you to combine and summarize cases; if you have different information for each client, then it is difficult to develop a descriptive summary of



program participants or clientele. If you collect different information on program outcomes for individuals, then it is difficult to produce a complete, concise summary of benefits the program has provided

Consider the following examples:

- If your program collects client profile or intake information for each new client coming into the program, and if you have prior education data for only ½ of the program participants, then when it comes time to explain your program to someone (i.e. a potential funder, or someone who wants to make use of the program, then you cannot provide a full description of program clients.
- If your program collects follow-up data on persons who completed the program (such as school performance, or relationships with family members), and you do not have that information for all individuals who completed the program, then when someone asks if the program ‘works,’ you will not be able to say with confidence that a certain percentage of program participants improved their school performance or improved relationships with others.
- If your program collects program participation data for participants (e.g., number of sessions attended, number of program components completed), and for some reason that data is not collected for a few months, then you will not have complete information about program participation, because the information was not collected systematically over time.

Thus, one of the most basic principles of program evaluation is to collect information systematically – the same way for all individuals, and the same way over time.

Documenting programs/descriptive research – one of the most basic things that ER does is to explain things: what programs do; what their clients are like; how program procedures work; how programs are designed and implemented; how programs solve problems they encounter; stories about successful program participants; etc. Thus, one of the most basic things that evaluation researchers do is make observations and take notes about how programs work. Practically speaking, one of the best research products an RJ program can produce is a complete, detailed description about program processes, clients, staff, components, etc.

This is how knowledge is disseminated, how other people learn about programs, and how they get ideas for how to implement programs of their own. Consider this – if one is to conduct a more detailed evaluation of an RJ program, such as whether program clients improve or achieve positive outcomes, without the basic information about how the program worked in the first place, the other outcome and results-oriented information is less helpful to others, and more difficult to understand. So, as a basic rule or guideline, RJ programs should document with as much detail as possible how they get started, how they develop and grow, the challenges and constraints they encounter and how they resolve them. Additionally, what activities they engage in, and what effect their work seems to have on their clients and communities.

Explaining program structure, in addition to developing descriptive information, is important for RJ programs to develop information about the structure of their organizations:

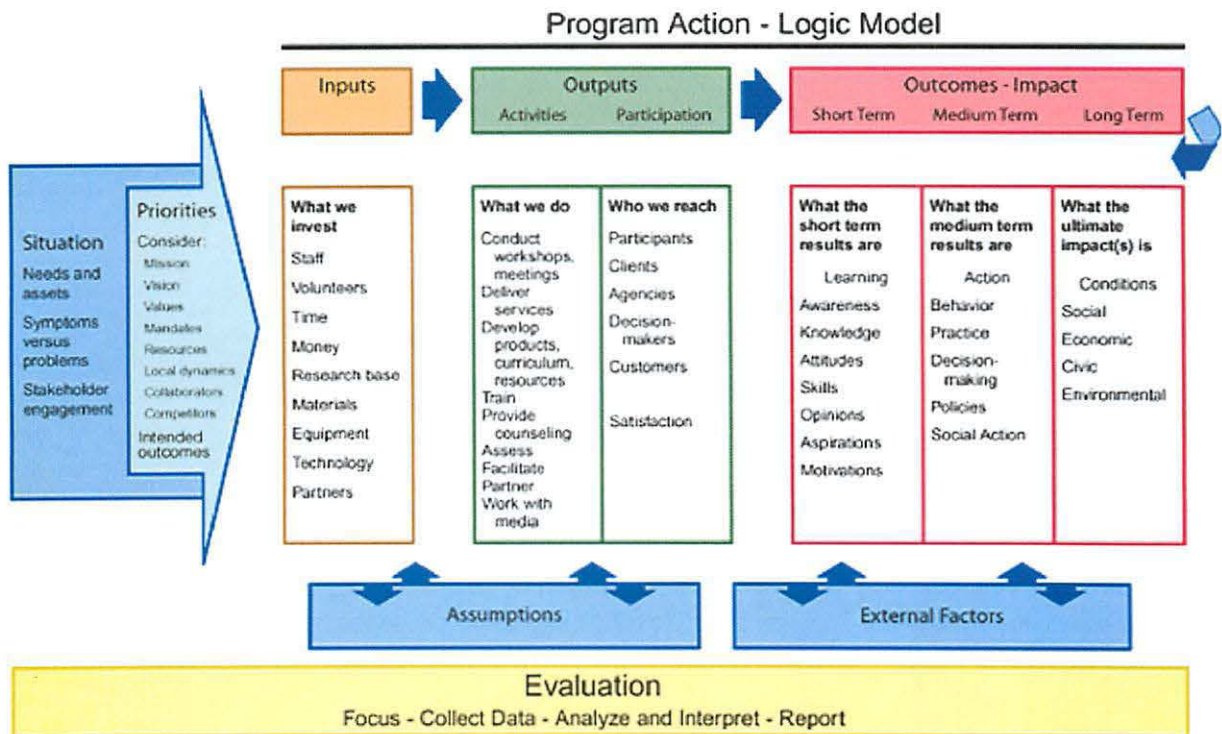
1. Logic models (see figure 1 for example)
2. Organization charts

3. Schematic diagrams
4. Decision-making processes
5. Explanation of how their organization interacts with other organizations (often referred to as the organization or task environment)

This information is typically more chart, table, and graphics oriented in nature. It provides a visual supplement to the descriptive/narrative information referred to above. It often gives a good visual representation of the program, its key elements and processes, and readily directs program personnel toward program elements and processes that would benefit most from evaluation (refer to logic model example below).

Data collection is a very basic and common element of RJ program administration. Programs simply cannot run, or last, if they don't keep track of what they do. They routinely collect data about clients, finances, activities, services provided, contacts made, etc.

Figure 1: Logic Model



Recalling the discussion above about systematic data collection, when RJ programs want to evaluate themselves, or when they are evaluated by others, there is a great amount of data collection that happens.

*The good news* is that a lot of the data required for evaluation is already collected by the program as part of its routine data collection activity.

*The bad news* is that the data collected is often not as systematically collected as evaluators would wish, or it is not retained for long periods of time, or it is not in formats that are most helpful to evaluators.

Referring back to the logic model example above, the RJ program should collect, and retain, data regarding the following inputs, activities, outputs, etc.

- Inputs (resources, training, collaborations, legislation, equipment, physical space, etc.);
- Activities (outreach, training, recruitment, intake, assessment, treatment, services, meetings, community events, etc.);
- Outputs (results of outreach, training assessments/knowledge gains, client profile, behavior changes, positive developments with clients, outcome of community events, etc.);

Basic evaluation questions and analysis – Assuming that a logic model is in place, and that some data collection has occurred, the next issue is to consider basic evaluation questions and issues, such as:

1. Was the program implemented as planned?
  - a. If not, why not, and what challenges were encountered that produced the deviation from plans (Note: This occurs quite frequently and is often expected. The sign of a healthy organization is reacting to data and experiences and making good adjustments)
2. What were the lessons learned that others could benefit from?
3. Did the program meet its original, or revised goals, for example?
4. Did it recruit and attract the appropriate clients?
5. Did it recruit and train properly the appropriate staff?
6. Were the required activities put in place?
7. What were the participation rates by clients?
8. Did it solve the problems it set out to solve?
9. Were outreach activities successful?
10. Did the program have impact?

- a. Short-term impact = expected positive results in a number of possible areas:
  - i. Outreach and public education
  - ii. Outreach and client recruitment
  - iii. Staff development and engagement
  - iv. Fundraising/funding
  - v. Client participation
  - vi. Client behaviors and developments
  - vii. Collaboration with external entities and stakeholders
- b. Long-term impact=expected positive results regarding the problem(s) addressed by the program, the program clients, and/or the community affected by the program
  - i. Reduction in harms
  - ii. Reduction in crime or delinquency
  - iii. Positive client outcomes/indicators
  - iv. Positive community outcomes/indicators
- c. Other potential impacts:
  - i. Knowledge production = those involved and concerned have a better understanding of the nature and extent of the problem(s) they are addressing, or that have come to their attention in the course of doing their work
  - ii. Consensus building = the extent to which the various individuals/organizations/stakeholders have come to a more shared

understanding of the nature and extent of the problems, and of how to address them collectively

- iii. These impacts are important, even if the evaluation reveals that the program was not implemented as planned, and even if the outcomes were not as successful as anticipated. Doing this work, coupled with systematic collection of basic information according to a logic model or some other scheme, will produce good information and good knowledge that will improve RJ. This will build the knowledge base/ the evidence base of the restorative justice program

### **Data Collection Basics for Non-evaluators**

Data collection is key to sustainability, effective implementation, and making sound judgments about the merit and worth of the program and its effectiveness.

Determining what data is available, accessible, and useful are key initial steps. What data does the organization currently collect? How can the data be utilized? In essence, we can make more informed judgments in the long haul about the success, effectiveness of the program based upon the types of data available at the outset. We must, however, consider the types of data that is available to collect (individual, environment, and system, etc.). Each type of data creates a different picture and provides various manners of assessing the program.

Collecting various types of data allows program administrators to better understand what is happening in and around the program. Program administrators should think about which type or data (quantitative, qualitative) can be most useful and where.

Furthermore, it is also key to think about drafting surveys, protocols, entrance interviews, exit interviews, client interviews, and others documents to capture the appropriate data.

There are two main types of data collection, quantitative and qualitative.

- 🚦 Quantitative = number of cases referred, how many served, how many reached agreement, referrals
- 🚦 Qualitative – stories, narrative, etc., measuring and assessing stories, experiences, and perceptions.

In addition to these two most commonly recognized data there also exists environmental data and or system data. Environmental/system data can be diverse and broad. It can range from the organizational environment, community environment, and the culture and climate of each. It can include data around the organization, its operations, etc., thinking about how these entities can potentially impact the program, activities, and final findings.

Data collection can include community demographics, socio-economic status, educational demographics, social class, community culture, climate, social group presence in the community. Organizational and system level data such as types of activities in the organization, how often they happen, what is the process of action, number of incidences, infractions, etc. can answer useful questions about the program and clients being served.

Data collection should undoubtedly include and even begin with client data. Data about clients (race, age, education, socio economic status) but it is more than that. It is about understanding population served. That data begins to build a knowledge base



about the client which will expand to family history, culture, ways of life, etc. Finding about family history, culture, way of life, etc. This knowledge can help to assess what other variable(s) may impact findings of affected relationships between variables being studied. This process will also include weeding out spurious relationships that can make for more informed and solid findings.

Data collection efforts should also include data about resources. Collecting data about resources is key to making determinations about what is needed to support program operations and processes (i.e. equipment, space, training, collaboration, and external support). Then the program should be monitoring and assessing the amount of these resources, their availability; or they should be making plans to acquire them.

Lastly, data about program activities, process and results is pertinent to the evaluation of a program. Gathering data around what is happening within the program, protocols, steps, implementation, how often activities are taking place, who do they most commonly serve, and why all has value. This data can help in making decisions about the program processes and whether activities are in place to produce or impact desired results. Data about results informs the outcomes one should expect to see from the program.

### **Data Analysis Basics**

Now that data is collected, “where do we go from here”? This section will provide an overview of how to make sense of the data that has been collected. Analyzing data can involve a process from simple to complex. Data analysis can be as simple as preparing monthly budgets, it does not require in depth knowledge of mathematics or statistics. The basic notion is comparing variable, identifying trends and relationships.

Once data is collected, on data can be analyzed to measure the importance of a range of different relationships. However, it is crucial to assess how relationships assessed may have been impacted by outside factors (i.e. environment, organizational structure, individual factors).

### **Steps in Data Analysis**

1. Tabulation – is the primary step which facilitates the understanding of data. Quite simply, it is counting the number of responses in a category. Tabulation includes coding, categorizing, sorting, naming/defining categories, handling missing data, identifying outliers.
2. Using measurement tools (i.e. surveys, interview questions, documents as a guide)
3. Analysis and comparisons - Identifying trends and relationships between variables, analyzing the strength of relationships and trends. Furthermore, using this process to determine what the data tells us, what do the findings say, and what conclusions can we draw from the data by assessing what is observed, comparing relationships between variables, etc.

### **Analyzing data over time**

Program administrators often implement programs with the focus on effective implementation and think about data collections secondarily. However, in order to make sound judgments about the impact or the intervention, it is key to think about data collection in conjunction with implementation. Foundational data collection, baseline data collection, is key to making determinations about outcomes related to program

Program administrators will often think about measuring outcomes pre- and post-intervention, and they will often make one measure before and one after. A limited pre/post design does not account for many threats to validity (history, maturation, regression to the mean, etc.). Once you measure outcomes before and after, you are measuring data over time = longitudinal analysis.

Now, if an evaluator is going to measure outcomes pre and post, you should at least make multiple measures pre and post; if you only make one measure before and one measure after, you may miss some important information about trends. For example, if the outcome (say, youth court referrals) are high at the pre measure and low at the post measure, that looks good. However, if the referrals were trending downward for months before the pre-measure and continued trending downward in the post intervention period, you might incorrectly attribute the downward trend to the intervention when in fact, the trend was downward for months before and months afterward.

Of course, if an evaluator had matched or randomized comparison group in addition to the pre-/post-analysis, then he/she is in the experimental design realm and accounts for many of these problems. While pre/post analysis alone is necessary, it is not sufficient to attribute cause and effect; but analyzing multiple data points before and after is better than measuring once before and once after

Generally speaking, more data points = more information = more sophistication = better analysis = more confidence in attributing outcomes to the intervention.

### **Analyzing Program Data**

It is assumed that most programs already collect a lot of different forms of data. In most cases, this data can be very beneficial in evaluating the program. In short if the program has a solid data collection base around things happening in the programs then using this data to judge the program will become a fairly simple task. Collecting data around (e.g., referrals, admissions, number of sessions held, attendance at sessions, successful completions, progress made) will speak volumes to the evaluation of the program.

### **Analyzing Client Data**

Analyzing who the program's current population is and using this data to assess who the program should target and further using the data to ensure that the program is informed about its clients, their needs, and the growing need of the population they serve is central to program sustainability. This is key to ensuring that the program is equipped to deal with the client, has services to fit the need of clients, and in fact, ensure the program is targeted at the proper population. Furthermore, analyzing this data allows program administrators to more clearly make informed judgments about the impact of the intervention or programs while weeding out external factors.

### **Analyzing Resource Data**

Analyzing resource data allows program administrators to assess the needs of their program. As well as to make determinations about how to acquire the necessary resources to support operations and the program overall. It allows them to assess if additional funding is needed to obtain necessary resources and is a way to ensure the program has what it needs to be sustainable.

- E.g. If government funding is trending downward, then more effort should be expended on other sources of funding.
- E.g. if space is becoming increasingly scarce (if the program is growing), then there needs to be a plan/search for new/additional space; resources need to be measured just like outcomes.

### **Data Presentation**

Once the data has been tabulated and analyzed the data, presentation is essential to paint a clear picture of what the data tell us. This is your art work. The key here is the intended audience and the delivery of the results. Many times, program administrators are seeking to collect data to not only judge program, but to improve programs with the ultimate goal of receiving and applying for additional funding or even maintaining funding. Therefore, presentation is key, the most crucial element is to think of the audience you are presenting data findings to, tailor to fit that audience. Use this process to tell your story/of the restorative program.

Think about audience, their expectations and what they want to see. Use the following visual effects:

- Visuals - to explain complex ideas, notions
- Tables – What data should be included, what makes a good table
- Graphs – Clutter free, clear and concise picture of findings
- Slides/Presentations

### **Simplicity of Evaluation**

The purpose of this primer is to attempt to simplify the complexity and intricacy that is placed on evaluation research and particularly the evaluation of RJ programs and initiatives. Program evaluation in and of itself is viewed as a perplexing process, presenting an assortment of confounding obstacles which evaluators must overcome. Restorative Justice and the programs which utilize such practices have similarly been viewed as complex, multifaceted, and shaped around a set of broad, idealistic values. It is these idealistic values that have attributed to the increased interest in emerging restorative interventions. However, the evaluation of Restorative Justice initiatives, values, and principles, despite any challenge, is vital to the sustainability of these interventions.

Moreover, the work of evaluation is built into the practice of RJ. In RJ, those engrossed in the processes see the value, impacts and outcomes of the work they do. They see the positive youth outcomes, they assess the changes in behavior, the level of accountability and participation that increases, the growth in civic engagement. They evaluate every day in every restorative encounter. This primer attempts to help program administrators and RJ stakeholders understand how to collect, document and present the evaluations they conduct daily.

Restorative Justice practices and programs have been said and proven to reduce recidivism, while reconcile, repair and transform. Therefore, it is not enough to simply know that RJ works, the evaluation and assessment of these interventions must in some manner incorporate traditional evaluation practices but then also deviate from traditional

methods and have a capacity for measuring and assessing these proposed non-traditional outcomes. The intent of this primer is to show how to incorporate evaluation into the day to day operations of Restorative Justice.